

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 04532 01 OF 02 041209 Z

42

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W

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R 041026 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9490

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 4532

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: PRES BHUTTO ON PAKISTAN DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION

1. SUMMARY: BHUTTO IS CONCERNED OVER THE NEED TO FIND SOME SOLUTION FOR CURRENT UNSTABLE POLITICAL SITUATION IN BALUCHISTAN. RECENT VIOLENCE THERE, WHICH LED TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT' S INTRODUCTION OF SOME ARMY UNITS, HAS COMPLICATED PROBLEM OF FINDING SATISFACTORY ACCOMMODATION. ANOTHER PROBLEM IS SNIPING BY NAP LEADERS AT SHAH' S ALLEGED INTERFERENCE IN PAK DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, WHICH BHUTTO DISCUSSED DURING RECENT VISIT TO IRAN. BHUTTO ANTICIPATES THAT NEW CONSTITUTION WILL TAKE EFFECT ON AUGUST 14. MEANWHILE, HE APPEARS TO BE CHANGING HIS MIND ON EARLIER INTENTION TO CALL FOR NEW GENERAL ELECTIONS THIS SUMMER. HE EXPRESSED CONTINUING CONCERN OVER HEAVY BURDEN OF PAK MILITARY EXPENDITURE. END SUMMARY

1. MORNING AFTER OUR RETURN FROM LEAVE IN INDIA, PRES BHUTTO SENT WORD INVITING MY WIFE AND ME TO HAVE DINNER WITH HIM AND BEGUM BHUTTO THAT SAME EVENING JUNE 3 AT PRESIDENT' S HOUSE IN NATHIAGALI HILL STATION. (BHUTTOS
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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 04532 01 OF 02 041209 Z

SPENDING SEVERAL DAYS AT NATHIAGALI, WHICH SOMEWHAT MORE THAN TWO HOURS' DRIVE FROM ISLAMABAD.) DINNER AND CONVERSATION LASTED FOUR HOURS; NO OTHER GUESTS WERE PRESENT. CONVERSATION COVERED VARIETY OF SUBJECTS BEING REPORTED SEPTELS. THIS MESSAGE COVERS BHUTTO'S COMMENTS ON DOMESTIC POLITICAL MATTERS.

2. BHUTTO OPENED CONVERSATION BY NOTING HIS MAJOR CONCERN IS OVER SITUATION IN BALUCHISTAN. PASSAGE OF CONSTITUTION HAD BEEN GREAT STEP. SINCE THEN, A QTE NATURAL MAJORITY UNQTE HAD EVOLVED IN SUPPORT OF PRESENT PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT IN NWFP, WHERE PREVIOUS NAP/JUI COALITION HAD LOST CONSIDERABLE STRENGTH IN PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY, WALI KHAN (NAP CHIEF) WAS CONTINUING HIS SHARP ATTACKS ON BHUTTO REGIME (AS WELL AS ON ALLEGED IRANIAN INFLUENCE ON BHUTTO) BUT BHUTTO THOUGHT HIS BARK DID NOT HAVE MUCH BITE AS REGARDS NWFP. BALUCHISTAN WAS DIFFERENT MATTER. NEW PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT THERE UNDER GOVERNOR BUGTI AND CHIEF MINISTER JAM SAHIB OF LASBELA, WHICH REPLACED EARLIER NAP-LED GOVERNMENT, HAD NOT BEEN ABLE ESTABLISH ITSELF AS FIRMLY AS BHUTTO HAD HOPED. PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT WITH SUPPORT OF PPP WAS STILL NEGOTIATING, BHUTTO VOLUNTEERED, TO WIN OVER SOME NAP MEMBERS OF PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY WHO WERE HOLDING OUT FOR RATHER HIGH PRICE. BHUTTO ESTIMATED THAT AT THIS MOMENT PRESENT GOVERNMENT WOULD BE SHORT OF MAJORITY BY TWO SEATS IF VOTE OF CONFIDENCE WERE TAKEN IN PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY. LARGELY TO PLAY FOR MORE TIME BEFORE SHOWDOWN ON VOTE, BUDGET SESSION OF BALUCHISTAN ASSEMBLY WOULD NOT MEET UNTIL JUNE 22, SOME TWO-THREE WEEKS LATER THAN WOULD ORDINARILY BE EXPECTED.

3. BHUTTO COMPLAINED THAT POLITICAL SITUATION IN BALUCHISTAN, WHICH WAS ALREADY DIFFICULT ENOUGH, HAD BEEN COMPLICATED BY VIOLENCE RESORTED TO BY ELEMENTS OPPOSED TO PRESENT GOVERNMENT. HE MENTIONED UNPROVOKED SHOOTING OF EIGHT MEMBERS OF DIR SCOUTS JUST OVER TWO WEEKS AGO AND ALSO AN INCREASE IN VIOLENCE BY MENGAL TRIBESMEN IN JHALAWAN AREA. CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAD HAD NO CHOICE, HE SAID, BUT TO DEPLOY SOME ARMY UNITS IN ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN ORDER. ARMY HAD BEEN WELL RECEIVED AND HAD NOT HAD TO FIRE A SINGLE SHOT. IN RESPONSE MY QUERY AS TO WHETHER PAK
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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 04532 01 OF 02 041209 Z

AIR FORCE HAD BEEN BROUGHT INTO ACTION, AS SOME HAD ALLEGED, BHUTTO STATED THAT PAF HAD DROPPED SOME SUPPLIES BUT THAT WAS ALL.

4. BHUTTO THEN RECOUNTED HIS NEGOTIATION WITH FORMER BALUCH GOVERNOR BIZENJO AND FORMER BALUCH CHIEF MINISTER MEGAL (BOTH OF NAP) NOT LONG BEFORE BHUTTO HAD DEPARTED

ON VISIT TO IRAN IN MID- MAY. PURPOSE HAD BEEN TO WORK OUT AMICABLE ARRANGEMENT INTENDED TO STABILIZE SITUATION IN PROVINCE. UNDERSTANDING THEY REACHED AT THAT TIME WAS THAT A NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT, HEADED BY NAP CHIEF MINISTER AND INCLUDING MEMBERSHIP FROM PPP AS WELL AS JUI, WOULD REPLACE PRESENT MINISTRY LED BY JAM SAHIB. IN ADDITION, GOVERNOR BUGTI (WHO IS ANATHEMA TO NAP) WOULD BE REPLACED BY SOMEONE ACCEPTABLE TO NAP AS WELL AS TO BHUTTO. UNFORTUNATELY, SINCE THEN, NAP HAD MADE THINGS DIFFICULT BY INDULGING IN VIOLENCE AND ALSO IN SWIPES AT ALLEGED IRANIAN INFLUENCE ON BHUTTO AND ALLEGED INCLINATION OF SHAH TO INTERFERE IN PAK DOMESTIC POLITICS.

5. ON LATTER POINT, BHUTTO RECALLED HAVING TOLD CHARGE BEFORE DEPARTING FOR IRAN VISIT, THAT HE HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT SET BACK BY COMMENTS ON PAKISTAN ATTRIBUTED TO SHAH IN LATEST INTERVIEW WITH CY SULZBERGER. HE SAID SHAH WAS ACCUSTOMED TO OPERATING IN POLITICAL CLIMATE SUCH AS EXISTS IN IRAN AND DID NOT SEEM TO UNDERSTAND PROBLEMS FACING BHUTTO IN DEALING WITH DOMESTIC OPPOSITION. SHAH HAD EXPRESSED TO BHUTTO HIS CONCERN OVER NAP POLICIES AND INTENTIONS AND SEEMED TO THINK THAT BHUTTO COULD SIMPLY DISPOSE OF NAP LEADERSHIP SO THAT IT WOULD NO LONGER PRESENT PROBLEM. BHUTTO SAID HE HAD SPOKEN AT SOME LENGTH TO SHAH, EXPLAINING HIS OWN LIMITATIONS UNDER PAK POLITICAL SYSTEM AND URGING SHAH TO INVITE BIZENJO AND MANGAL TO VISIT IRAN SO THAT HE COULD SIZE THEM UP AND GIVE THEM BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF SHAH' S SINCERE INTEREST IN WELL- BEING OF PAKISTAN. BEFORE BHUTTO LEFT IRAN, HE HAD IMPRESSION THAT SHAH WAS AGREEABLE TO THIS PROPOSAL.

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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